

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3922

S E C R E T CONAKRY 0138

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, GV

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUINEA -- ILHR INTEREST IN POLITICAL
PRISONERS

REF: STATE 015076

1. RELEASE OF INFO TO ILHR AS PROPOSED REFTTEL, IN ADDITION TO HAVING UNHELPFUL EFFECTS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED, COULD EXPOSE OR PINPOINT EMBASSY SOURCES WHO WOULD LIKELY BREAK OFF CONTACT AND POSSIBLY FACE REPRISALS WHEN ILHR WENT PUBLIC. RELEASE OF FIELD REPORTS IN SEMI-RAW FORM IS DEFINITELY NOT RPT NOT IN U.S. INTEREST HERE. MOREOVER, IT APPEARS FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR LEWIN THAT THE ILHR, VIA PARIS, ALREADY POSSESSES MUCH OF THE DATA WE HAVE REPORTED.

2. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES HOWEVER THAT IS IN U.S. INTEREST TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH ILHR ON HUMAN RIGHTS TRENDS GENERALLY, TO AVOID DISTORTIONS, ERRORS, OR MISPERCEPTIONS, AND TO ENCOURAGE ACCURATE PUBLIC DATA BASE. THEREFORE, SUGGEST ILHR BE INFORMED ONLY RPT ONLY AS FOLLOWS:

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-- QUOTE: RECENT AMNESTIES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA CONSTITUTE AN ENCOURAGING TREND THERE. IN DECEMBER, IN ADDITION TO THREE LEBANESE DUAL NATIONALS, A LARGE NUMBER OF GUINEANS WERE RELEASED. UNOFFICIAL REPORTS PUT THE TOTAL AT AT LEAST 60; THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER LE MONDE IN PARIS USED A FIGURE OF NEARLY 300. AMONG THESE REPORTEDLY WERE A NUMBER OF FORMER

OFFICIALS AND RANKING MEMBERS OF SOCIETY. FOREIGN MEDIA ANNOUNCED FURTHER RELEASES IN JANUARY. OBSERVERS SEE GOOD PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RELEASES IF THE GUINEA GOVERNMENT'S NEWLY RECONCILIATORY TACTICS CONTINUE IN 1978 AND PARTICULARLY IF WESTERN COUNTRIES INCREASE ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH GUINEA. END QUOTE.

3. COMMENT ON REFTEL (NOT RPT NOT FOR RELEASE)

-- DEATHS IN PRISON: AMBASSADOR LEWIN RECENTLY TALKED IN PARIS WITH THE THREE LEBANESE EX-PRISONERS CITED REFTEL. THEY CLAIMED TO HIM THAT DIALLO TELLI DIED ON FEBRUARY 26, 1977; ALIOUNE DRAME ON MARCH 1, 1977; AND ALPHA OUMAR BARRY ON UNSPECIFIED DATE. THEY GAVE PERSUASIVE COOROBORATIVE DETAILS INCLUDING CELL NUMBERS. LEWIN BELIEVES THIS INFO IS PROBABLY CORRECT. HOWEVER, EMBASSY'S GOG SOURCE -- WHO HAS PROVED GENERALLY RELIABLE IN THE PAST -- STICKS TO HIS STORY UNDER REPEATED QUESTIONING, EVEN AFTER SERIOUS ISSUE OF CREDIBILITY WAS POSED, THAT HE PERSONALLY SAW ALIOUNE DRAME AND ALPHA OUMAR BARRY ALIVE IN CAMP BOIRO IN DECEMBER. HE HAS NOT PERSONALLY SEEN DIALLO TELLI FOR ABOUT NINE MONTHS. SOURCE PERIODICALLY VISITS CAMP BOIRO WITH SENIOR MINISTER AND SOMETIMES HAS OPPORTUNITY TO GLIMPSE CERTAIN INMATES. EMBASSY THUS IS AS YET UNABLE TO RESOLVE FACTUAL CONTRADICTION IN THESE REPORTS BUT WILL
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KEEP TRYING.

-- NUMBER OF RELEASES: JUST PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR FRANCE IN LATE DECEMBER, LEWIN HEARD FROM GOG SOURCE HE CONSIDERS EXCELLENT THAT 211 PRISONERS HAD BEEN RELEASED. EMBASSY'S BEST INTERIOR DOMAIN SOURCE, AFTER RECHECKING, HOLDS TO STORY THAT 62 WERE RELEASED. HAYECK'S FIGURE OF 42 APPEARS TO BE NUMBER RELEASED AS OF DAY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FROM GUINEA AND BEFORE SUBSEQUENT RELEASES. WHATEVER THE EXACT FIGURE, IT IS CLEAR THAT AN UNPRECEDENTEDLY LARGE AMNESTY OCCURRED IN FRAMEWORK OF INTERNAL RELAXATION IN DECEMBER.

-- RANK OF RELEASES: EMBASSY HAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED RANKS OF MANY OF THOSE RELEASED, INCLUDING MIDDLE-LEVEL CADRES AND FAIRLY WELL KNOWN INDIVIDUALS, DEFINITELY NOT NOBODIES.

4. GOG SOURCE BELIEVES THAT EDOUARD LAMBIN (DUAL NATIONAL, FRENCH FATHER, GUINEAN MOTHER) IS STILL IN CAMP BOIRO, NOT RELEASED AS LE MONDE ALLEGED IN DECEMBER. SOURCE STATES THAT IN PRESIDENT TOURE'S MIND LAMBIN WAS DEEPLY

IMPLICATED IN 1970-71 SUBVERSION AND WILL BE ONE OF
VERY LAST TO BE RELEASED.
FRENCH AMBASSADOR LEWIN PLANS
TO MAKE ANOTHER DEMARCHE IN HIS BEHALF SOON.

5. SEVERAL GOOD SOURCES AVER THAT ABOUT JANUARY 19
FURTHER RELEASES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE MADE, 20
ACCORDING TO FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS. SOURCES SAY THOSE
RELEASED DATED FROM 1970-74 ARREST PERIOD. GOG SENIOR
SOURCE ALSO CLAIMS THAT TOURE HAS NOW INSTRUCTED INTERIOR
MINISTRY THAT LETTERS OF DENUNCIATION WILL NO LONGER BE
CONSIDERED AS FIRST STAGE IN "PROOF" PROCESS IN POLITICAL
CASES. (COMMENT: IF TRUE, NEW AMNESTY IS STILL ANOTHER
WELCOME INDICATION THAT PRESIDENT TOURE INTENDS TO CARRY
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OUT PROGRAM OF CONTINUING RELEASES WHICH EMBASSY'S
PREVIOUS REPORTING PREDICTED.)
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